

Parent Advisory

Milpitas Sister Cities Commission



Huizhou Municipality, China A City of Milpitas Sister City Student and Cultural Exchange

This exchange offers our high school students a magnificent opportunity to experience Chinese culture, history, and family life. In return, our students share American culture, history, and family life with a visiting student from Huizhou.

Background

Huizhou Municipality is located approximately 53 miles north of Hong Kong, in the Guangdong Province, and was founded over 1,400 years ago. It has a resident population of 3.2 million, however the population within the main center of Huizhou City is one-half million. This is where the government seat resides.

First Visit to Huizhou Municipality

Eight Milpitas students and three chaperones began our student exchange in April of 2005. Our delegation flew to Hong Kong and then traveled about 60 miles north to Huizhou. We spent four days touring Huizhou and visiting the hosting high school. Local tours included:

- SeanXi castle, with a river boat tour to the castle;
- Longmen warm springs with recreational swimming in the warm springs, and;
- HuangSi village and pottery farm and formal tea service.

Milpitas students stayed in the homes of their hosting exchange student and the adults stayed in a four star hotel on Westlake in the center of Huizhou. Meals were provided for students by hosting families and the entire delegation enjoyed formal dinners.

Four Days in Beijing

The Milpitas delegation then spent four days near Beijing on tour with a professional tour company, escorted by an English-speaking guide. These exciting and educational tours brought ancient China to life in the backdrop of modern Chinese life:

- Tian'anmen Square and the Forbidden City;
- The Great Wall of China;
- The Ming Tombs;
- The Temple of Heaven, a classic architectural example;
- The Peking Opera, an exciting combination of gymnastic feats and drama;
- The Summer Palace, a fairy tale retreat the last Empress of China. This lovely palace consists of many pavilions, pagodas and small palaces set on the shores of beautiful Kunming Lake;
- A silk factory, where students viewed silkworm cocoons transformed into thread;

- A jade factory, where students learned how raw material is processed and carved by local artists, and;
- An excursion by rickshaw to Hutong, and ancient area in Beijing, to tour a home.

Expectations & Costs

Milpitas Sister Cities Commissioners, MUSD administrators and teachers, act as chaperones and accompany eight to 12 student delegates.

Parents are advised that students are viewed as “Junior Ambassadors”, are expected to act with dignity and kindness, and are required to attend all ceremonial functions. Orientation session attendance is required.

As part of the exchange, students that travel to China shall host a high school student from Huizhou when these students visit Milpitas. The Milpitas student’s family shall welcome the visiting student into their home to share an American family’s home life and traditions. The hosting family is expected to provide excursions for the visiting student to local points of interest beyond those scheduled as part of the exchange itinerary.

Estimated student cost of the 2006 trip to China is \$1,300. Adult chaperones should budget approximately \$1,500. This estimate includes international airfare, land transportation, accommodations in Beijing, meals, and tour expenses (including English-speaking tour guides that accompany the delegation at all times). This estimate does not include gifts and souvenir shopping.

Regarding gifts, it is customary for visitors to present token gifts to host families and dignitaries. This is not expected to be an unreasonable cost to parents and you will be advised how to best provide gifts for your student to present. In addition, the City of Milpitas provides an official city gift, usually presented at a ceremony to Huizhou dignitaries by a Milpitas elected or appointed official.

October 2005

Huizhou students will visit Milpitas the week of October 10 – 15. Travel dates are not yet confirmed, however planning for the impending visit includes:

- Home-stay with Milpitas host families
- Bay Cruise of San Francisco Bay
- Cable-bus tour of San Francisco
- Dinner at Pier 49
- Classroom attendance at Milpitas High School
- Great Mall shopping tour
- MHS Homecoming activities on Friday, October 14

Visit to Huizhou, 2006

This will most likely occur during the 2006 Spring Break. (Tentatively – April 13th – 24th) Initial planning includes touring Beijing and adding the National Historical Museum at Tian’anmen Square, which will provide fascinating exposure to China’s cultural and natural history.

Student participants must be Milpitas citizens at high school level, 15-18 years of age. Interested persons can find applications on the Milpitas city website. All applications must be submitted by March 1st, 2006.

Contact Information

Dennis Grilli, Chair, Milpitas Sister Cities Commission

(408) 946-8337
dennisgrilli@sbcglobal.net